



BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE581

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Stock Assessment of Eastern Bering Sea Pollock; Peer Review Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS has requested the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) to conduct a peer review of the agency's stock assessment of Eastern Bering Sea walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*). The CIE is a group affiliated with the University of Miami that provides independent peer reviews of NMFS science nationwide, including reviews of stock assessments for fish and marine mammals. The Eastern Bering Sea pollock stock assessment is reviewed annually by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Plan Team, and the NPFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee. The CIE review will examine whether the assessment incorporates the best available scientific information and provides a reasonable approach to understanding the population dynamics and stock status of Eastern Bering Sea pollock. The public is invited to attend and observe the presentations and discussions between the CIE panel and the NMFS scientists who collected and processed the data, and designed the underlying model.

DATES: The public meeting will be held from May 16 through May 19, 2016, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.

ADDRESSES: The review will be held at the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Building 4, Seattle, WA 98115. Photo identification is required to enter this facility.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Ianelli, 206-526-6510.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CIE panel will consist of three peer reviewers who will assess materials related to the topic, participate in a review workshop with the NMFS scientists who developed the model and the analytical approach, and produce a report. This review will be highly technical in nature and will cover mathematical details of the analytical approach. More information about the CIE is available on its website at www.ciereviews.org.

Members of the public are invited to observe, and will be provided opportunities to contribute each day from May 16 through May 19, 2016. The final report will be available prior to the September NPFMC Plan Team meetings and will consist of individual reports from each panelist and a summary report. The results of the review will be presented during the September 2016 NPFMC Plan Team meeting, which will be announced at a later time in the **Federal Register**.

Special Accommodations

These workshops will be physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for

sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ron Felthoven, 206-526-4114, at least 10 working days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 29, 2016

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director,

Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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